



CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

Press Release

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New Environmental Laws Go into Effect Jan. 1, 2007

SACRAMENTO – A host of new state environmental laws will take effect at the stroke of midnight on New Year's Eve. California residents will notice changes next year as a result of the new laws, from store plastic bag recycling programs to larger fines against illegal dumping on private property.

The state will also extend its program allowing alternative fuel and hybrid cars to drive in car pool lanes for another three years. The program, originally scheduled to close at the end of 2007, will continue to encourage motorists to purchase the cleanest, most fuel-efficient cars on the market.

Below is a list of selected legislation that will become law in 2007.

- **AB 2449 (Levine) - Recycling plastic carryout bags:** Plastic shopping bags represent a disproportionately large share of litter and marine debris. It is estimated that less than five percent of plastic bags disposed are being collected for recycling. Beginning Jul. 1, 2007, this bill will require store operators to establish a recycling program that provides an opportunity for a customer to return a clean plastic carryout bag back to the store. A convenient at-store recycling program will increase recycling and reduce the number of plastic bags in the waste stream and in the state's waterways.
- **AB 2600 (Lieu) - HOV lanes:** This bill extends the sunset date from January 1, 2008, to January 1, 2011 for the cleanest, most fuel-efficient vehicles to use carpool or high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes without meeting the minimum occupancy requirement and authorizes an additional 10,000 clean air decals to be issued for hybrid electric vehicles. This bill is intended to encourage California motorists to purchase hybrids, which use some of the same advanced technology components as battery and hydrogen fuel cell vehicles, offering a bridge to a zero emissions future.
- **AB 2289(Ruskin) - Plastic bulk merchandise containers:** Increasingly, plastic crates are being stolen and then taken to recyclers for money. This legislation will require businesses that recycle, shred, or destroy plastic bulk merchandise containers, prior to purchasing five or more containers, to obtain proof of ownership from the seller and verify his or her identity.

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- **AB 2253(Hancock) - Vehicle illegal dumping:** This bill authorizes a court to impound, in specific instances, a motor vehicle used in illegal dumping of waste when the registered owner has multiple convictions for misdemeanor illegal dumping of waste matter. The bill also eliminates the need for county and city governments to develop and adopt ordinances on an individual basis.
- **AB 1992(Canciamilla) - Solid waste dumping:** This bill expands the prohibition against illegal dumping to include private property by increasing the minimum penalty from \$100 to \$250, and increases second and third offenses to \$1,500 and \$3,000 respectively.
- **AB 1333(Frommer) - Grease waste haulers:** This bill would make it a misdemeanor to improperly remove grease waste from grease traps or interceptors or otherwise improperly deposit grease materials at any place other than an authorized facility. The purpose of this bill is to make egregious violators of improper handling and disposal of grease removed from traps subject to criminal penalties.

For more information on these bills, please visit: <http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/>

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